

REMARKS

The last Office Action has been carefully considered.

It is noted that claims 1-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) over the patent to Meier.

Also, claims 1-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) over the international patent document WO 97/04850.

In connection with the Examiner's objection of the claims, applicant has canceled the original claims and submitted a new set of claims 6-9.

Claim 6 constitutes a combination of the original claims 1 and 2 and it is limited to the hexa-lobed sheath element 4 shown in Figures 2 and 5.

It is respectfully submitted that the new features of the present invention which are now defined in claim 6 are not disclosed in the references and can not be derived from them as a matter of obviousness.

U.S. patent to Meier applied by the Examiner substantially corresponds to the international patent document WO 97 04850.

None of these documents teaches now the new features of the present invention defined in claim 6 which is more limited than the original claim 1.

These features are not disclosed in the references, and also the references do not have any hint or suggestions for their changes so as to arrive at the applicant's invention as defined in claim 6.

Claim 6 should be considered as patentably distinguishing over the art and should be allowed.

As for the dependent claims 7-9, these claims depend on claim 6, they share its presumably allowable features and therefore it is respectfully submitted that they should be allowed.

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application is most respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner require or consider it advisable that the

specification, claims and/or drawings be further amended or corrected in formal respects in order to place this case in condition for final allowance, then it is respectfully requested that such amendments or corrections be carried out by Examiner's Amendment, and the case be passed to issue. Alternatively, should the Examiner feel that a personal discussion might be helpful in advancing this case to allowance, he is invited to telephone the undersigned (at 631-549-4700).

Respectfully submitted,



Michael J. Striker
Attorney for Applicants
Reg. No. 27233

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